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SUBJECT: AZERBAIJAN PROMOTES UN RESOLUTION ON INFO SUPERHIGHWAY

REF: BAKU 551

¶1. SUMMARY: Azerbaijani Minister of Communications Ali Abbasov and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mahmud Mammadgulyev visited Geneva to solicit support for the "Transnational Eurasian Information Superhighway" (described reftel). Azerbaijan has not yet drafted a resolution, and Charge urged the Minister to do so to gain U.S. support at the fall meeting of the U.N. General Assembly. END SUMMARY.

¶2. An Azerbaijani delegation visited Geneva July 14, taking advantage of ECOSOC and ITU meetings, to promote the idea among various Missions, including the US, for a Transnational Eurasian Information Superhighway. Minister Abbasov stressed that the concept would help with regional development, e-commerce, and democratization.

¶3. Deputy Foreign Minister Mammadgulyev said Azerbaijan plans to submit a draft resolution in New York to the 2nd Committee this fall, but is first trying to create a "group of friends" pending further reactions from other countries.

¶4. Charge reiterated USG support for development of information technologies, and pressed the Azerbaijan delegates to produce a draft of the resolution, noting that support will depend on what the resolution says. Mammadgulyev said the draft resolution has not yet been finalized. Azerbaijan PermRep Amirbayov followed up with a list of reasons why the USG should support a resolution, namely, that it would help Azerbaijan diversify from its petroleum-based economy; strengthen the East-West internet corridor; facilitate implementation of the World Summit on Information Technology (WSIS); and help the region achieve the Millennium Development goals. Abbasov said some of the country's neighbors may have some hidden concerns about information security and endangering their national monopolies, but he does not expect any overt opposition to emerge to the Azerbaijan resolution.

GRIFFITHS #